



# Climate and Weather

Old Town San Diego State History Park  
Junior Ranger Program

SINCE 1864

# What is Climate and Weather in San Diego?

- San Diego is located within a coastal desert climate.
- A coastal desert receives small amounts of rain each year and has high but not as extreme temperatures as an inland desert.
- The marine layer and coastal fog keep San Diego moist during the fall and spring.
- San Diego can experience flooding when rain does arrive during the late winter and spring.



# The affects of San Diego's climate on native plants and animals.

- Over the course of thousands of years, plants and animals have evolved adaptations to allow them to live in San Diego.
- Many native plants retain water, such as the agave and cactus.
- Some native plants only produce seeds during sufficiently rainy years.
- Animals like ground squirrels and rabbits have brown and grey fur to camouflage them against the dry grass that make up most of San Diego's terrain.

# Adapting to San Diego's Climate: The First People, the Kumeyaay

- In order to live in San Diego, humans have had to adapt their way of living to suit San Diego's coastal desert climate.
- The first inhabitants of San Diego, the First People, the Kumeyaay, lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle moving from the game-rich coast in the summer to the acorn-rich mountains in the winter.
- Due to the mild climate, the Kumeyaay built small, temporary homes out of readily available materials such as grass and reeds.



# Adapting to life in San Diego: Settlers from Spain, Mexico, and the eastern US

- As settlers from Spain, Mexico, and the eastern United States arrived in San Diego, they had to adapt their previous ways of living.
- Spanish and Mexican settlers built adobe houses out of local mud and clay. Adobe houses were well suited to the San Diego climate because of their ability to stay cool in the summer.
- The people of San Diego used stone water filters and brick lined wells to obtain clean water all year round.
- Houses were covered in plaster to keep out moisture.



# Climate change

- San Diego's climate is not a constant unchanging phenomena.
- The people of San Diego have had to live with unexpected changes in climate such as long periods without rain (drought) and unexpected large amounts of rain (flooding).
- While it is natural for San Diego to have temporary changes and unexpected shifts in weather and climate, San Diego, as well as the rest of the world, is currently experiencing human-caused climate change.
- This human-caused climate change has damaged, and continues to affect, San Diego's people, plants, and wildlife.



# At-Home Activity: Draw the Weather

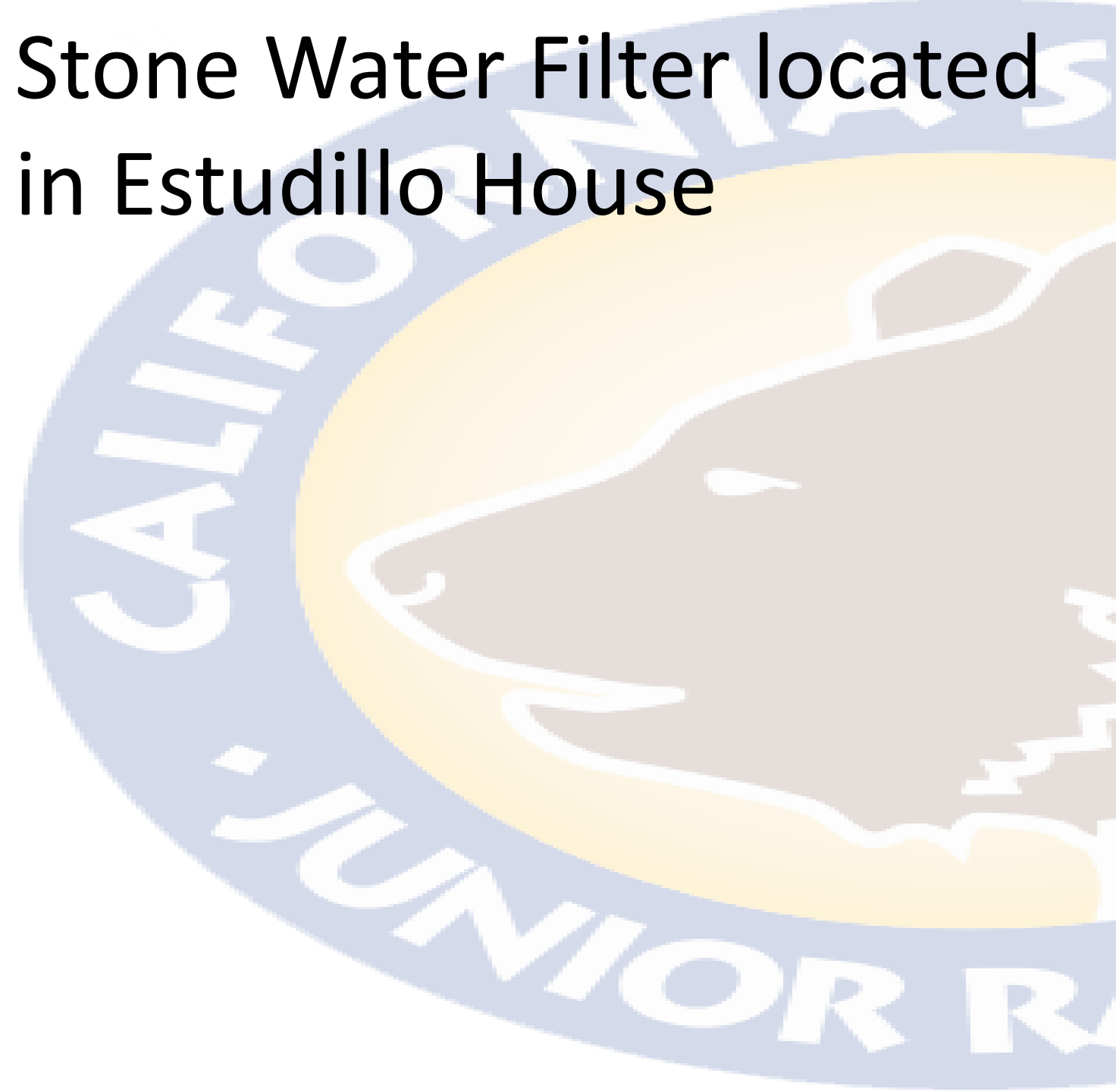
- Check out page 16 of your Junior Ranger logbook and complete the activity.
- Submit your work to [OldTown.SanDiegoSHP@park.ca.gov](mailto:OldTown.SanDiegoSHP@park.ca.gov)

# At-Home Activity: How you adapt to your environment!

- Now it's your turn to investigate how you adapt to and affect your own climate and weather.
- Step 1: go around your home, yard, or local community and search for ways your life is affected by the weather and climate. Examples include weather specific clothing like rain jackets and umbrellas, and climate control equipment like fans and heaters.
- Step 2: Draw pictures of all the different objects and behaviors you could find related to climate.
- Step 3: Compare the objects you found to the list of historical climate adaptations on the next few slides.
- Step 4 To receive awards submit your drawing to [OldTown.SanDiegoSHP@parks.ca.gov](mailto:OldTown.SanDiegoSHP@parks.ca.gov)



# Stone Water Filter located in Estudillo House



Adobe house with clay roof  
tiles





Camouflaged lizard laying  
against a cactus



# Wood stove inside Mason Street Schoolhouse

